



Formation Devotional

January 15, 2020 Morning

Forming Worship, Life, and Ministry Together at Christ Covenant Church

Enter into this time expectantly, knowing that God delights to reveal himself to you. Use this email as you are able, in whole or in part.

Call to Prayer

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 59:16)

Opening Prayer

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 230)

Confession of Sin

Heavenly Father, loving King, our thoughts and motives cannot be hidden from Your sight. Our self-pity and pride, our cowardice and sloth, our greed and lust, our anger and envy are laid bare before Your eyes and ours. We open ourselves to You and ask that You cover us in Christ. Let us hear Your voice: saying His blood is our peace, His death is our freedom, His Spirit our power, His smiting our safety. And convince our hearts afresh that in Your service is perfect freedom. Amen.

Take a moment to confess your sins, knowing that he hears you, and respond in gratitude according to the assurance of grace.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

Praying the Psalms

Read the psalm prayerfully back to God by faith in Christ.

Psalm 21

The King Rejoices in the LORD's Strength

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices,

and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

2 You have given him his heart's desire

and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah

3 For you meet him with rich blessings;

you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

4 He asked life of you; you gave it to him,

length of days forever and ever.

5 His glory is great through your salvation;

splendor and majesty you bestow on him.

6 For you make him most blessed forever;

you make him glad with the joy of your presence.

7 For the king trusts in the LORD,

and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

8 Your hand will find out all your enemies;

your right hand will find out those who hate you.

9 You will make them as a blazing oven

when you appear.

The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,

and fire will consume them.

10 You will destroy their descendants from the earth,

and their offspring from among the children of man.

11 Though they plan evil against you,

though they devise mischief, they will not succeed.

12 For you will put them to flight;

you will aim at their faces with your bows.

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength!

We will sing and praise your power.

New Testament Reading

Matthew was written for a Jewish audience. That's why he starts his gospel with a genealogy. Tracing the lineage of Jesus back to David would be significant to a Hebrew who was wondering if Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. In that light, Matthew's references to the Old Testament reminds us that Jesus is God's fulfillment of the Jewish law and the prophets. The Sermon on the Mount becomes the new identity for the people of God.

Meditate on the passage, noting a few words or a phrase that stood out or a promise to meditate on today. Take them to God in prayer.

Matthew 11

Messengers from John the Baptist

1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples **3** and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" **4** And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: **5** the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. **6** And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? **8** What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. **9** What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **10** This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way before you.'

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. **12** From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. **13** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, **14** and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. **15** He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

17 “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

Woe to Unrepentant Cities

20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest

25 At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Prayers of Intercession

Church Community

- Pray for Christ Covenants elders & deacons: for wisdom, humility, and courage as they serve the church and city.
- Pray for the global church, especially for Christians in Asia: for underground churches, anti-trafficking policies, and protection from religious extremist groups.
- Pray for the churches in your neighborhood: that God would guide their ministries, provide needed resources, and raise up new leaders.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Wonder what your next step in spiritual formation is? Consider getting involved in a Growth Group.

For a handy guide to the devotional elements and an archive of past issues, visit ccotc.org/devotional.